Developing a New Framework for Sovereignty and Security in the North

A Discussion Paper
prepared by the Governments of Yukon,
Northwest Territories
and Nunavut

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Developing a New Framework for Sovereignty and Security in the North

Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is to suggest, for discussion, a number of issues related to Sovereignty and Security in the North and pose a series of questions for deliberation. These can be found on page 16-17.

The paper examines the shifting foundation for past and present government activity, new global pressures, and resulting challenges affecting sovereignty and security. Common Territorial principles and key interests are then presented, followed by concluding suggestions for "a way forward" to a stronger and more secure Canada.

As the second largest circumpolar country in the world, Canada has asserted its sovereignty in part through the use, occupation, and development of its northern Territories. Its northern perimeter has been a part of North American defense systems since the 1950s.

Sovereignty and security objectives for Canada have always had a Northern Canadian dimension. In these times of shifting geopolitical landscape, globalization, climate change, and energy concerns, the focus on Canada's North is greater than it has ever been.

Northerners have always been affected by world events and world powers, and Canada's North holds increasing strategic importance. Proximity to the northwest Pacific and Russia has placed the North in a strategic military location and attention must be paid to securing its borders. The issue of the status of Arctic waters will re-gain prominence as pressure increases for Arctic resource development (particularly fresh water, oil and gas, minerals, and diamonds) and shipping access. With this increased pressure will come increased marine and land traffic, which will require monitoring, and planning will have to be in place to deal with the eventuality of accidents, or other emergencies caused by it.

Hand-in-hand with considerations of emergency preparedness, the military importance of the North cannot be overlooked, and military presence is required to ensure secured borders and respond to security threats and criminal activity. While Canada and the U.S. have recently begun working together on joint border patrol and surveillance initiatives, care must be taken to ensure our sovereignty is not weakened by this activity.

Acting as a "sink" for atmospheric toxic substances, and particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, the North faces some unique environmental challenges. Research is required to enhance strategies for monitoring and assessment, as well as mitigation and adaptation. With significant reduction in summer sea ice projected to occur in the near future, and commensurate increases in marine access, there will be implications from this, as well, on safety, sovereignty, and security in the North. This includes issues that may arise in the Northwest Passage – claimed by Canada to be internal waters but claimed by some other countries to be an international strait.

Over the last decade, devolution and land claims have altered the political, economic and social structures of the North, and Northern governments have gained a larger role in managing northern lands and resources, in shaping their economies, and in safeguarding their citizens. The Arctic Human Development Report, endorsed by Arctic Council Ministers in November 2004, noted the dynamic challenges of evolving northern governance amid new development pressures. It also reaffirmed the continuing importance to northern residents of "controlling one's own destiny, maintaining cultural identity and living close to nature". While globalization is placing new pressures on the North for access to resources, with their Aboriginal partners, Territorial governments are taking steps to diversify and develop their economies in a sustainable way that provides maximum benefits to their citizens. Strong healthy communities will support Canadian sovereignty over, and security of, the Arctic.

Modern communications, modern governance, and changing economic relationships have brought a new connectedness to the North, and among Northerners. New governance responsibilities have also created new demands for capacity building and co-operation. Taking a lesson from the past, Canada cannot exercise its sovereignty and ensure northern security for the future without the involvement of Northern peoples.

The new federal-Territorial dialogue on northern sovereignty and security through the development of the Northern Strategy will need to reflect the North's changed circumstances.

Canada's northern Territories share the following objectives with respect to sovereignty and security in the North:

1. Building northern capacity to enhance Canada's ability to assert its sovereignty in the Arctic.
2. Protecting the northern environment: adapting to the impacts of climate change and globalization and providing a northern-based capacity to prevent, detect and respond to emergencies and natural disasters.
3. Ensuring maximum benefits to Northerners from private and public investments.

How can these interests be met?

1. ***Learning from the past.*** Assessing the effectiveness and impacts of previous federal policies and programs can provide valuable lessons for the way forward.

2. ***Supporting the continued evolution of northern political development.*** Cooperative decision-making processes need to be in place across the North.

3. ***Incorporating local knowledge and participation in emergency preparedness and an expanded science, resource management and regulatory decision-making regime***. Projected climate change impacts, together with ongoing resource developments, require more extensive monitoring and observation systems. Investments are also needed to address adaptation through science, research and innovation, and to involve communities in research design. Northern capacity to respond to emergencies requires improved communications and coordination of northern resources.

4. ***Ensuring the benefits from resource development and international investments accrue to northern residents and businesses***. Such revenues represent an investment in self-determination and healthy communities. Ultimately this supports a more stable and secure North.

Fundamental to meeting challenges in the North is the need to plan for the future now. Continuing a dialogue and ensuring a role for northern governments in a wide range of coordinated mechanisms will assist in identifying the problems and solutions we must collectively address.

1. Introduction

Sovereignty and security policies affecting Canada's North are changing as a result of globalization and the new geopolitical landscape which has followed in the wake of September 11, 2001. Over the last decade, devolution and land claims have altered the political, economic and social structures of the North, and northern governments are taking more responsibility for the security of their citizens.

Canada's North holds increasing strategic importance. The Yukon, Nunavut, and Northwest Territories together comprise 40 percent of Canada's land mass, contain two-thirds of Canada's marine coastline, hold 10 percent of the world's fresh water, and share 14 percent of the total U.S./Canada border. Its sparse population of about 100,000 residents plays a key role in exercising Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic by occupying and supporting nation-building in the North.

The Territorial Premiers understand that a new relationship concerning sovereignty and security policies needs to be forged with the Government of Canada. This paper is intended as an essential first step in a new federal-Territorial dialogue on sovereignty and security in the North. It flows out of the Northern Co-operation Accord signed by the three northern Premiers in September 2003, and related commitments in the Northern Strategy[1] framework released in December 2004.

This paper examines the shifting foundation for past and present government activity, new global pressures, and resulting challenges affecting sovereignty and security. Common Territorial principles and key interests are then presented, followed by concluding suggestions for "a way forward" to a stronger and more secure Canada.

1.1 Definitions

For purposes of this paper, the following definitions developed by the Arctic Security Interdepartmental Working Group (ASIWG)[2] are used.

Northern Sovereignty is defined as "a recognized right, ability and will to exercise exclusive jurisdiction within a geographical area (with a defined border, people within it and some form of government)."

Northern Security is defined as the "protection and maintenance of public health and safety, law and order, and quality of life while respecting the people, their culture and the environment of the North."

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[1] *Nation Building – Framework for a Northern Strategy* (December 2004).

[2] ASIWG was established by the Canadian Forces Northern Area (CFNA) in 1999 to enhance security and sovereignty through information-sharing and cooperation. It is chaired by the CFNA Commander.

2. The Shifting Foundation for Sovereignty and Security in the North

In 1880, the British Crown ceded its remaining Territories in North America to the then recently-formed Dominion of Canada. At the end of the 19th century, Canada's efforts to assert its sovereignty in the North were triggered by the influx of American gold rush prospectors at the Chilkoot Pass, and by visiting whalers on Herschel Island and in Hudson's Bay. In addition, the presence of various explorers from other nations in the Arctic forced Canada into action to ensure its sovereignty. First the Northwest Mounted Police then the RCMP were called upon to show the flag, and keep peace and order.

Wartime projects like the Canol Road, the Alaska Highway, and northern airfields generated significant investments in infrastructure. The Cold War saw the construction of the Distant Early Warning (DEW line) radar system, and later the North Warning System. These projects had major social and environmental impacts that Northerners had little control over. With the dissolution of the Soviet system in the 1990s, Cold War military concerns faded as Russia shifted focus to its economic and environmental problems. In the North, human security objectives, such as economic development and healthy communities, gained new prominence. As the Arctic Human Development Report[3] noted, "the declining relative importance of military-based security and the more acute awareness of the often common objectives of environmental protection and human development" have become pre-conditions for region-building.

Canada-U.S. relations continue to be pivotal in northern issues. While conscious of our role in hemispheric defence through the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), and our reliance on the U.S. for defence security, maintaining good relations with the U.S. in the face of pressures has always been a balancing act.

From whalers to fur traders, multinational interests have always exploited the North. Since the 1960s however, there has been a new industrial focus on northern development, shaped largely by the discovery of minerals and oil and gas resources, such as those at Prudhoe Bay, Alaska. The establishment of the Arctic Council, led by Canada, formalized a new structure for circumpolar relations based on shared goals for environmental protection and sustainable development. These relationships are reflected, not in military investments, but in cooperation, dialogue and the sharing of knowledge amongst governments and Aboriginal peoples in the North.

In the last decade, Canada has taken key steps to build a more cooperative foundation in the North for northern sovereignty and security. These include:

- Taking a strong role in the work of the Arctic Council;
- Creating the position of a Circumpolar Ambassador; and
- Developing the Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy.

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[3] The Arctic Human Development Report (2004), prepared for the Arctic Council, is the first comprehensive assessment of human well-being covering the entire Arctic region. It identifies common values and challenges of Arctic residents, and areas for further research to monitor and address impacts of industrial activities, ensure local benefits, and support cultural resiliency.

These steps were framed largely within a foreign policy aimed at building relationships with our circumpolar neighbours, particularly post-Soviet Russia.

In the last year, federal Throne Speeches and Budget commitments addressed growing domestic interest in a strong and secure North within Canada. These steps included:

- a commitment to review Canada's defence and foreign policies;
- a $70 million contribution to seabed mapping as part of Canada's commitment to implementation of the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS);
- the development of a Northern Strategy framework, and provision of $120 million over three years for its implementation;
- a commitment of $90 million over five years to ensure that economic development opportunities are developed in partnership with northern Canadians; and
- increased funding for health care services and Territorial Formula Financing.

The Territories believe that, to support northern objectives, the federal government should share its leadership role in advancing this security approach in Canada's North. The three northern Premiers committed to working together to meet similar goals for their region in a Northern Cooperation Accord signed in September 2003. They brought their shared interests to the attention of the federal government and identified a number of key interests and issues that needed to be considered from a Territorial perspective, and the challenges and opportunities all levels of government faced in addressing them.

In terms of sovereignty and security, these interests involved more than just safeguarding borders and conducting military patrols. They included maintaining healthy communities, sustainable human and economic development, protection of the environment, and good relations with our neighbours. The federal government's recent commitment to Territorial governments and Aboriginal partners to integrate these goals in a Northern Strategy recognizes their value in building a strong and secure Canada.

3. Recent Developments and Events: The Changing North

The use, occupation, and stewardship of northern land, resources and waters are important to Canada's claims of sovereignty in the Arctic. The presence of its Arctic peoples for millennia has helped to assert Canada's sovereignty. Aboriginal land claims continue to support this objective.

This paper recognizes the federal government's lead role in sovereignty and security policy, but it also recognizes a new influence by Northerners. This influence is affected by several recent developments and events.

3.1 Governance

The revisions to the *Yukon Act* and the devolution of resource management authority to Yukon in 2003, and planned devolution for the Northwest Territories and Nunavut in the coming years, are changing governance frameworks in the North. The roles of Territorial and Aboriginal

governments in determining the future of the North are becoming clearer though land claims and self-government agreements. Northern governments have gained a larger role in managing northern lands and resources, in shaping their economies, and in safeguarding their citizens. As such, they can strengthen Canada's ability to assess and respond to national sovereignty and security issues.

3.2 Economic Development

Globalization is placing new pressures on the North for access to resources. Market demands and security concerns have generated a new interest in circumpolar resources, transport routes and technologies that disregard traditional borders. While these interests offer economic development opportunities for the North and Canada, they are sometimes in areas of potential dispute, such as the Canada-U.S. offshore border, and Hans Island, which is claimed by Denmark.

Continued pressure within the U.S. to develop oil and gas resources in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge presents risks to the region's environmental and cultural security, potentially affecting many northern Canadians.

At the same time, Territorial governments are taking steps to diversify and develop their economies with their Aboriginal partners. The northern population is young and there are urgent education and training needs. A viable northern community, as defined by the Arctic Human Development Report, is one in which people are "able to dwell and prosper, for some period, finding sources of income and meaningful lives."

Northern governments need sustainable development with maximum benefits for their citizens. They want a say in determining how that development occurs.

3.3 The Changing Environment

The northern environment serves as a "sink" for toxic substances in the air and water. Persistent organic pollutants, such as PCBs, radioactive and other types of contaminants, threaten the safety and security of Northerners. The Arctic is also vulnerable because it faces the "first and worst" impacts of climate change that have global implications. Adapting to and mitigating their effects are presenting the North with unique challenges and opportunities. Thawing permafrost and warmer temperatures are changing habitat, altering land and marine use, threatening public infrastructure and having an impact on economic and cultural activities. Climate change is leading to economic change by opening new transport routes and changing traditional hunting grounds. These changes in turn create new environmental challenges.

From a federal perspective, the North contains many of this country's environmental challenges; and its fragile, less forgiving environment makes resource development inherently riskier and more costly.

3.4 Post-911 Security Measures and Globalization

New security measures are being taken every day to protect North American airspace, land borders, and marine boundaries. Some measures require new types of cooperation for surveillance, and challenge our notion of sovereignty, for example, new joint border patrols.

Increased trade and mobility caused by globalization and more open markets are helping to increase air, marine and land traffic, both civilian and military. Monitoring this traffic, as well as planning how to address accidents or other emergencies caused by it, are emerging needs in the Arctic.

4. The Resulting Challenges and Territorial Interests

The pressures summarized above have resulted in a number of challenges to sovereignty and security in the North. They include:

1. Monitoring the Northwest Passage and the recently ratified Law of the Sea;
2. Managing northern circumpolar resource development;
3. Military presence and Canada's northern borders;
4. Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) development; and
5. Russia's ongoing environmental challenges.

4.1 The Northwest Passage and the Convention on the Law of the Sea

Recent reports such as the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment,[4] indicate that the average extent of Arctic sea-ice cover in summer has declined by 15-20 percent over the past 30 years. It is predicted this will accelerate, with near total loss of summer sea ice projected for the late 21st century. The same report notes significant implications of this declining ice cover: "Sovereignty, security and safety issues, as well as social, cultural and environmental concerns are likely to arise as marine access increases."

Included within this future scenario are implications for the Northwest Passage. While the impacts of reduced summer sea ice are being hotly debated,[5] it is fair to say climate change will require more regulatory control over Arctic shipping. An assessment on Arctic shipping that will consider climate change scenarios will be undertaken by the Arctic Council in the next two years.[6] Canada's assertion of sovereignty in the Northwest Passage will require stronger

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[4] ACIA, Impacts of a Warming Arctic: Arctic Climate Impact Assessment. Cambridge University Press, 2004 http://www.acia.uaf.edu

[5] Canadian academics Franklyn Griffiths and Rob Huebert share differing views on the impacts of thinning ice on Canadian sovereignty, as expressed in separate articles: "The Shipping News: Canada's Arctic Sovereignty Not on Thinning Ice," in International Journal, Spring 2003, and Rob Huebert's article "The Shipping News Part II: How Canada's Arctic Sovereignty is On Thinning Ice", in International Journal, December 2003.

[6] As recommended in the Arctic Marine Strategic Plan, accepted and endorsed at the Ministerial meeting of the Arctic Council held in Iceland, November 24, 2004.

regulatory tools and increased surveillance and monitoring capacity, especially for submarine traffic in the short term.

Against this backdrop, in 2003, Canada ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which obligates Canada to participate in mapping the seabed of the Arctic's continental shelf. This could, in turn, enhance Canada's sovereignty in the North. The information gained through the seabed mapping and activities under Canada's Oceans Action Plan should contribute to environmental knowledge, greater international scientific cooperation, and greater certainty around offshore boundaries and development. The Territories anticipate being briefed, consulted and involved in the development of this important investment.

At the same time, Canada's activities in the Arctic could also raise new challenges. While Canada claims the Northwest Passage as internal waters[7], the U.S., Japan and some European countries claim that it is an international strait subject to international rules on passage and the environment. An example that illustrates this: in 1969, the *USS Manhattan* sailed through the Northwest Passage. The American ship did not ask for permission to transit through the Passage despite having crossed within five kilometres of Canadian land.

It is clear that sovereignty and security must be a major focus of Canada's foreign policy over both the short and the long term.

4.2 Managing Northern Circumpolar Resource Development

Many countries, including the United States and China, are looking to Canada's North to meet their strategic development objectives. Resources like fresh water, oil and gas, minerals and diamonds are generating economic activity and exploration in all three Territories. The Mackenzie Valley and Alaska Highway pipeline projects are advancing, as are projects aimed at improving transportation and telecommunications connections between Alaska, Canada and Russia. Large resource development projects introduce security issues such as increased vulnerabilities to sabotage, terrorist threats and organized crime, along with potential environmental impacts.

4.3 Military Presence and Ensuring Secure Borders

Canada's military presence in the North has increased slightly in recent years; however, there remain capacity issues affecting the ability to respond to emergencies and threats to security, including criminal activity. Canada's Ranger patrols, the "eyes and ears of the North", have been expanded. Rangers continue to play a key role in Arctic surveillance and sovereignty exercises,

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[7] Canada's claim to sovereignty in the Arctic is predicated on the "Sector Principle". In 1907, the Canadian Senator Pascal Poirier presented the sector principle to justify Canada's claim over all the islands in the Arctic Archipelago. According to Poirier's principle, Canada could claim title over a pie-shaped wedge north of her mainland between the 60th and 141st longitudes and extending to the North Pole." (Kenny. p. 11)

however, it has been noted that proposals made in 2000 to issue better equipment to the Rangers to assist them in their Arctic surveillance patrols have not yet been acted on.[8]

Northern marine boundaries could be exposed to a range of security issues and sovereignty disputes as a result of improved marine access. Economic interests may create new, or reopen disputed, ownership issues such as the Danish claim to Hans Island. Pressure to develop Alaskan oil and gas resources could even see encroachment of the U.S. oil and gas leases in the disputed maritime boundary between Canada and the U.S. in the Beaufort Sea. Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic needs to be supported by both a strong physical and technological presence.

There is a recognized need for increased aerial and underwater monitoring of marine traffic through the Northwest Passage. Canada's purchase of the upholder class of submarines, and plans for purchase of the joint support ships, will provide the Canadian Forces with greater marine surveillance and control capabilities in the North. However, large gaps will continue to exist.

Several recent federal reports recognize the importance of cooperation to ensure Canadian security, including the first-ever comprehensive statement of Canada's National Security Policy *Securing an Open Society: Canada's National Security Policy* released in April 2004. However, little attention was paid to regional interests or strategic approaches, including issues in the North and the Arctic. The most relevant areas of emphasis for the North are proposals over "modernizing" the emergency preparedness system and transportation security measures.

There has been no comprehensive assessment in the North to determine the adequacy of Canada's military presence and northern emergency response capability and infrastructure (such as ports) in general. The Territorial governments have stated that measures must be taken to assure the safety of the security of northern peoples, and that a northern capacity to respond to emergencies, including any created by the operation of the Ballistic Missile Defence system, must be assured.

More emergency preparedness exercises that include border security interests will help to address these needs.

4.4 Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) System[9]

While Prime Minister Martin has announced that Canada will not participate with the U.S. in a North American BMD system, there remain questions about the potential impact of the operation of the system on the North. The U.S. military is currently working to field five ground-based missile defence interceptors at Fort Greely in central Alaska, less than 200km from the Alaska/Yukon border.

Northerners remain concerned with the possibility of contamination from either the construction of sites or their contents, that Ballistic Missile Defence sites near Canada could become targets for attack, and that Canada's North could be subject to nuclear or biological "debris" from objects

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[8] Northern Sovereignty and Security: Review of Canadian Government Activities, p. 9, report prepared for the Yukon Government Intergovernmental Relations Office, October 22, 2004.

[9] Northern Premiers wrote to the Prime Minister with a separate discussion paper on this issue.

shot down during attack. Testing of the system in the North could also possibly result in debris falling on Canadian soil. The Territorial governments have been provided with officials' briefings on this issue, but have not been consulted or informed about the impacts of it on the North.

4.5 Effects on the North of Russia's Ongoing Environmental Challenges

Pollution and the effects of unchecked industrial and military development in the Russian Arctic for half-a-century continue to threaten the environmental and health security of Northerners.

About 40 percent of Russia's Territory has been classified as being under high or moderately high ecological stress. Radioactive dumping by northern Russia in the Kara Sea and adjacent waters constitutes two-thirds of all the radioactive materials deposited in the world's oceans. Monitoring stations are detecting the presence of radioactivity in Canada's Arctic waters but the impacts on wildlife and the circumpolar world are not yet well understood.

Through the Arctic Council, Canada has contributed to international efforts to help Russia begin to tackle this massive problem. International cooperation will continue to be critical over the next 10 to 20 years to ensure mitigation of further circumpolar impacts of contaminants on the environment, and on health and cultural security. As well, research and monitoring to address existing and new contaminants found in the North, such as mercury and brominated fire retardants, must be funded and continued. This will require greater testing and monitoring capabilities in the North.

5. A Way Forward

Effective Northern Strategy development will ensure that Northerners are engaged in discussions on these issues and have the opportunity to contribute to solutions. Some potential areas in which these issues can be addressed include:

1. Strategic investments in Northern security and sovereignty infrastructure;
2. Partnerships among Northern peoples, institutions and governments;
3. Understanding and monitoring the changing environment through scientific and traditional knowledge;
4. Circumpolar, national and pan-Northern relationship building; and
5. Risk assessment of sovereignty and security-related policies.

5.1 Strategic Investments in Northern Security and Sovereignty Infrastructure

Physical infrastructure to respond to increased air, marine and land traffic will be required in the form of communications and monitoring equipment, marine vessels, aircraft and associated infrastructure – including port facilities and enhanced airports. This infrastructure must be based in the North and be staffed with trained Northerners to ensure appropriate response time. Ensuring adequate security for critical infrastructure will also be required.

Social infrastructure, supporting education, research, science, innovation and institutional capacity will also contribute to sustainable development and support sovereignty objectives in the North.

5.2 Partnerships among Northern Peoples, Institutions and Governments

Asserting sovereignty in Canada's north can be best achieved through a partnership between the federal government, Territorial governments and Aboriginal governments. Territorial governments are maturing governments capable of managing their own affairs, and Aboriginal governments are increasingly taking responsibility for theirs through land claims and self-government agreements.

Canada's northern sovereignty has relied on Canadian people who occupy northern lands and use northern waters. The administration of Canada's northern sovereignty and security activities need to be rooted in, and connected to, the people who live there, the institutions they serve and the governments that serve them.

Northern-based federal government staff members have provided an important advisory function regarding northern realities and needs within the federal government system; however, there is a need for a coordinated presence in the North. Northern programs are too often run out of a multitude of regional offices in the south (e.g., the Departments of Fisheries and Oceans, Environment, and Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada). Additionally, many federal departments do not seem to have a clear and coordinated approach to planning their activities in the North. There is also a need for clarity around how federal interdepartmental committees on northern issues obtain advice and information from northern governments.

Through work under the Northern Strategy, there is a challenge and opportunity to develop a coordinated approach to government policy and planning activities in the North. As well, many Northerners are unaware of the scope and range of government programs and activities that might support Territorial objectives. It is hoped that the work carried out under the Northern Strategy will help to address this need. The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has been tasked with leading the federal government's work on this Strategy.

5.3 Understanding and Monitoring the Changing Environment

Increased knowledge about the circumpolar environment, its resources, and people will enable governments to better assess and respond to impacts on northern sovereignty and security. In the past, research was driven by defence and security matters and industrial interests in development. Today with an increasing number of environmental security triggers, and climate change, the research requirements to support Canada's sovereignty claim have expanded.

Traditional and scientific knowledge point to environmental change, but without solid baseline data, measuring and monitoring impacts and addressing mitigation is hindered. The scientific

work of the Canadian Arctic Shelf Exchange Study consortium underscores the interest in Arctic research inside and outside of Canada. It is recognized by most Canadian scientific organizations, however, that northern research efforts need to be expanded and focused. Even where there are funding objectives in place to involve northern researchers, this is occurring in only a limited way.

With the International Polar Year (IPY) coming up in 2007/08, there is an opportunity to work with the major granting councils, the Canadian Polar Commission, and northern governments and communities to prioritize northern research. Canada's IPY Secretariat's Steering Committee includes Northern science representatives. Other opportunities to involve Northerners in setting and meeting research goals, and for Canada to increase its investment in northern research, should be sought and capitalized on.

5.4 Circumpolar Relationship Building

Northern security can't be achieved through unilateral actions. Territories and Northerners have a culturally-, economic- and geographically-based relationship with, and interest in, our circumpolar neighbours. Territorial and Aboriginal governments and organizations are increasingly working at a pan-Northern level by building bi-lateral and multi-lateral relationships to advance their interests. These relationships are important in meeting Canada's goals to build security in the Arctic.

Circumpolar relations among nation states have been formalized through the Arctic Council, which grew out of the eight-nation-supported Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy. Today, sustainable development and environmental security have emerged alongside human security concerns as priorities for circumpolar cooperation.

Historical Aboriginal connections, predating northern legal borders, help to support peaceful, positive circumpolar relations: a clear contrast from a mere 50 years ago. Canada, along with Aboriginal and Territorial governments, has an opportunity, through circumpolar leadership, to ensure that northern boundaries continue to be a route for exchanging knowledge and understanding.

5.5 Policy Risk Assessment

Federal northern policies and major northern resource development pressures affect Northerners and the northern environment. Involving Northerners in developing human, wildlife and environmental impact and risk assessments for these policies and projects contributes to meeting related sovereignty and security objectives.

In January 2005, Territorial governments were asked to assist in the evaluation of the Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy (NDFP). One of the NDFP's objectives is to "assert and ensure the preservation of Canada's sovereignty in the North." There was very little information available, however, to assist Territorial partners in evaluating the policy. To remedy that, the

Territories could participate in the development of indicators to determine how well the NDFP is meeting its objectives. Another option might be to have a committee of the House of Commons undertake a review and update of the 1997 House of Commons report on "Canada and the Circumpolar World – Meeting the Challenges of Co-operation Into the 21st Century."

6. Common Territorial Priorities: Suggestions for a Stronger and More Secure North

This paper is the first collective Territorial attempt at setting priorities and defining a common approach for our North, and ultimately a stronger and more secure Canada. It is intended as a first step in a new federal-Territorial dialogue about security and sovereignty in Canada's North and the circumpolar north, and as part of the development of the Northern Strategy.

The following proposed principles, interests and actions offer a means to initiate and sustain this dialogue.

6.1 Guiding Principles

Shared Interests: Canada and the three northern Territories share common interests regarding sovereignty and security. However, as distinct jurisdictions, individual Territorial interests shall continue to be respected through bilateral mechanisms.

***Collaboration and Cooperation*:** The Territories have a clear and concrete role in cooperatively assessing and promoting northern sovereignty and security needs, and developing solutions with the federal government and other stakeholders. While each government has different jurisdictional responsibilities, there will be a focus on increasing levels of cooperation.

Effective Involvement of Northern Aboriginal Governments: Northern Aboriginal governments have a critical role in northern sovereignty and security discussions. Consultation and participation mechanisms shall be established on a tripartite basis, consistent with land claims and self-government agreements.

Respect for the Changing Environment: The Territories recognize that sovereignty and security, as it relates to foreign policy in the North, will be significantly impacted by changes in the environment, such as climate change. All levels of governments, including those in Canada, must work towards mitigating negative effects and, where possible, maximizing positive effects of such changes.

Commitment to a Strong Presence in the North: Canada's sovereignty and security in the North is based on secure and safeguarded international borders, and a demonstration of Canada's jurisdiction in Territorial lands and waters. As well, Canada's presence is reflected in domestic policies which promote strong Territorial and Aboriginal self-governments and sustainable communities.

6.2 Common Interests

The Territories have identified several key areas of interest they wish Canada to address in future approaches to sovereignty and security in the North.

1. Protecting the northern environment
   - Monitoring the health of the land and the people it sustains
   - Carrying out research to support development and maintenance of strong, healthy communities

2. Ensuring a northern-based ability to respond to emergencies, disasters and security needs

3. Ensuring an active role for Northerners
   - Participating in federal decision-making and planning for the North
   - Sharing in economic benefits from developments related to sovereignty and security
   - Recognizing that sovereignty can be reinforced through devolution, land claims and healthy, sustainable communities

6.3 Options for Exploration

The following list presents a number of possible steps to enhance sovereignty and security in the North while taking into account the principles and interests of northern governments. These and other options can be considered through the Northern Strategy framework consultations.

1. ***Northern Vision of Sovereignty and Security***. Develop a collective federal-Territorial vision of what sovereignty means in Canada's North and how to address emerging human and environmental security issues.

2. ***Promote formal and informal participatory mechanisms for Northerners to positively evolve sovereignty and security in the North***. Territorial governments can play a strong role in the Arctic Security Interdepartmental Working Group (ASIWG) and explore opportunities for additional pan-northern or bilateral mechanisms for regular input on sovereignty and security issues.

3. ***Establish an evaluation framework and provide resources to assist in the review of the Northern dimension of Canada's foreign policy***. This could assist in obtaining Territorial input into key Arctic issues and policies such as sovereignty and security, northern emergency response planning, circumpolar relations, and Arctic research.

4. ***Take a more direct role in the Arctic Council***. Explore with the Territorial governments how to determine effective roles and funding mechanisms to support capacity-building opportunities related to Arctic Council projects and activities. This might mean establishing northern liaison offices in the three Territories, as initially suggested in the Graham report on circumpolar cooperation.

5. ***Work cooperatively under the Northern Cooperation Accord***. The three Territorial governments can develop common positions and share individual Territorial interests on northern security and sovereignty issues.

6. ***Enhance public safety and emergency preparedness***. As part of the Northern Strategy, develop, with the Territories, an investment strategy for northern infrastructure that includes social and physical infrastructure needs that support sovereignty and security issues such as airports, ports and vessels communications systems, and monitoring and training programs.

7. ***Establish a Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness office in the North***. As part of this, enhance training opportunities to allow Northern residents to assist in emergency response.

8. ***Increase research on Canada's Arctic marine environment***: Consistent with Canada's Ocean Strategy, enhance funding for the Arctic Research division of Fisheries and Oceans including options for: a multi-disciplinary Arctic Ocean Research Centre; research by the Canada Coast Guard; and local community involvement.

9. ***Establish a Cabinet Committee on Northern Affairs*** to focus attention on northern issues, including security and sovereignty issues, with representation from the North.

10. ***Have the PM's Science Advisor adopt a special northern affairs portfolio.***

11. ***Assess interest in having a National Polar Institute***. An institute of this kind was recommended by the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, September 2003,[10] under the direction of a recognized scholar and governed by a Cabinet Committee. Its mandate would be to reinforce and strengthen Canada's claims to Arctic sovereignty and promote and fund scientific exploration of the North, ensuring the integration of traditional knowledge into scientific activities. This would involve a re-examination of the role and capacity of the Canadian Polar Commission.

12. ***Invest more research and science dollars into northern-based activities and those of the University of the Arctic***. This could include directing research dollars toward high-priority research. It would also involve capitalizing on the upcoming International Polar Year in 2007/08 to work with the Canadian Polar Commission to prioritize northern research, ensure research benefits sovereignty and security needs, and involve Northerners in setting and achieving research goals.

6.4 Discussion Points: Food for Thought.

1. Who has responsibility and control over the Northwest Passage?
2. What are the safety, environmental, monitoring and infrastructure support implications of a more easily-accessed Northwest Passage and other Arctic waters?
3. How can northern governments best position themselves to influence and benefit from seabed mapping and the Oceans Action Plan?

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[10] http://www.ciia.org/arctic.pdf

4. How can Canada achieve international recognition of its northern boundaries?
5. How can governments optimize the benefits of resource development while mitigating the drawbacks?
6. What are the long-term implications of greater foreign investment and interest in the North?
7. What level of military and emergency response presence is required in the North?
8. What are the implications of an inadequate military and emergency response presence?
9. What infrastructure must be put in place to support emergency preparedness?
10. How can northern governments ensure their advice and concerns are taken into account by military planners?
11. How can Canada cooperate with the U.S. to meet our border security objectives with minimal loss of sovereignty?
12. How can northern governments be kept informed on issues raised by the U.S.'s BMD system?
13. How can governments ensure the mistakes of the past (e.g. DEW line) are not repeated?
14. How can governments raise and maintain international attention on environmental mitigation in the North?
15. What can governments do to ensure adequate funding for addressing Northern environmental management and remediation?

7. Conclusion

Sovereignty and security objectives for Canada have always had a Northern Canadian dimension. In these times of globalization, climate change development and energy security concerns, the focus on Canada's North is greater than it has ever been.

Northerners have always been affected by world events and world powers. Proximity to the northwest Pacific and Russia has placed the North in a strategic military location. The issue of the status of Arctic waters will re-gain prominence as pressure increases for Arctic development and shipping access.

Modern communications, modern governance and changing economic relationships have brought a new connectedness to the North, and among Northerners. New governance responsibilities have also created new demands for capacity building and co-operation. Taking a lesson from the past, Canada cannot exercise its sovereignty and ensure northern security for the future without the involvement of Northern peoples today.